



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Box 25

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-40__

Phone: (651) 296-7863 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: sarah.hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us

RECEIVED

MAY - 9 2003

HDR Engineering, Inc.

May 7, 2003

Michelle F. Bissonnette
HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567

Re: Request for Natural Heritage information for vicinity of proposed Xcel Energy - Lakefield Junction to
Fox Lake High Voltage Transmission Line
NHNRP Contact #: ERDB 20030911

County	Township (N)	Range (W)	Section
Martin	102	32	5,6
Martin	102	33	1-11
Jackson	102	34	1-12,18
Jackson	102	35	1-6, 13-18
Jackson	102	36	1-3,10,13-15

Dear Ms. Bissonnette,

We have reviewed the two proposed route options for the above referenced transmission line and concur with your assessment that only one known occurrence of a rare feature has the potential to be impacted by the project. This feature, a Mesic Prairie remnant, is located in the right-of-way between the abandoned rail line and County Highway 14 in T102N R35W Section 5, in the immediate vicinity of the existing transmission line route option. Because more than 99% of the prairie that was present in the state before settlement has been destroyed, and more than one-third of Minnesota's endangered, threatened, and special concern species are now dependent on the remaining small fragments of Minnesota's prairie ecosystem, we feel that all prairie remnants merit protection. We strongly encourage Excel Energy to avoid impacting this prairie remnant either by selecting the I-90 route option or as suggested in your letter, by shifting pole locations to avoid disturbing the prairie habitat. If the latter option is selected, any disturbed soil adjacent to prairie areas should be revegetated with native species suitable to the local habitat as soon after construction as possible, to decrease the opportunity for exotic species to invade the area.

The Natural Heritage database is maintained by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, a unit within the Division of Ecological Services, Department of Natural Resources. It is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, natural communities, and other natural features. Its purpose is to foster better understanding and protection of these features.

Because our information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be rare or otherwise significant natural features in the state that are not represented in the database. A county-by-county survey of rare natural features is now underway, but has not been completed for either Jackson or Martin County. Therefore ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist on the project area.

Please be aware that review by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program focuses only on *rare natural features*. It does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. If you require further information on the environmental review process for other wildlife-related issues, you may contact your Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Shannon Fisher, at (507) 359-6073.

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929

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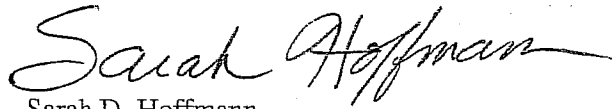


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Appendix G.1

An invoice for the work completed is enclosed. You are being billed for staff scientist review. Please forward this invoice to your Accounts Payable Department. Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

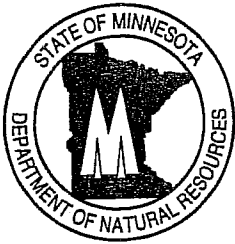
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Hoffmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" and last name "Hoffmann" clearly legible.

Sarah D. Hoffmann

Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator

encl: Invoice



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological Services
261 Highway 15 South
New Ulm, MN 56073

JUN 30 2003
HDR Engineering, Inc.

6/26/03

Michelle Bissonnette, Project Manager
HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567

Dear Ms. Bissonnette:

On behalf of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide some early-stage environmental review of your proposed transmission lines. The following comments are being provided for the Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake Substation transmission line only.

As discussed at our Windom meeting, the route following I-90 appears to offer the fewest environmental problems. The greatest area of concern is in the vicinity of Fox Lake. There is a Statutory Game Refuge on and around Fox Lake that can at times hold more than 10,000 Canada geese. We recommend use of the H configuration towers from MN Hwy 4 to the Fox Lake Substation. The use of H towers would enable all lines to be placed into horizontal planes, thereby reducing the potential for collision.

To further protect bird resources, flight diverters should also be placed on the shield wires in this location. We would also like to make sure that you are aware of the MN restitution rules for animals killed through your actions. These rules (MN Rules 6133.0030) call for \$50 restitution for geese. Although, with the precautions listed above in place, it is unlikely there will be major goose mortality. We wanted you to be aware of possible future restitution and ask that you take steps to minimize avian mortality.

If you have any additional questions regarding the MN rules about restitution and/or goose populations in this area, please contact John Schladweiler at (507) 359-6031.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon J. Fisher", is written over the typed name.

Shannon J. Fisher, Ph.D.
Environmental Assessment Ecologist
(507) 359-6073
Shannon.fisher@dnr.state.mn.us

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929

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Appendix G.2



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

RECEIVED
MAY 20 2003
HDR Engineering, Inc.

May 15, 2003

Ms. Michelle Bissonette
HDR Engineering
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567

RE: Excel Energy, Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake High Voltage Transmission Line
Jackson and Martin Counties
SHPO Number: 2003-2130

Dear Ms. Bissonette:


Thank you for consulting with our office during the preparation of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the above referenced project.

Based on our review of the project information, we conclude that there are no properties listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places, and no known or suspected archaeological properties in the area that will be affected by this project.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36CFR800, Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the protection of historic properties. If this project is considered for federal assistance, or requires a federal permit or license, it should be submitted to our office with reference to the assisting federal agency.

Please contact us at (651) 296-5462 if you have any questions regarding our comments on this project.

Sincerely,

 Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

Piner, Angela

From: Laurie_Fairchild@fws.gov
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2003 9:11 AM
To: Piner, Angela
Subject: Xcel project

Hi Angela,

As we just discussed on the telephone, I have reviewed the transmission line project planned for Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake. There are no threatened or endangered species issues and the Service has no other environmental concerns associated with the project. Thanks for contacting us.

Sincerely,

Laurie Fairchild
Fish and Wildlife Biologist



Transportation District 7
180 County Road 26
Windom, MN 56101-1868

RECEIVED

Office Tel: 507/831-1200
Fax: 507/831-1232

APR 29 2003

HDR Engineering, Inc.

April 28, 2003

Michelle Bissonnette
HDR Engineering
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567

Re: Xcel Energy Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake High Voltage Transmission Line

Dear Ms. Bissonnette:

This letter is in response to your letter dated April 10, 2003 soliciting feedback for the potential routes for the above referenced new high voltage transmission line.

Without question the first option utilizing the existing right of way is the most desirable from Mn/DOT's viewpoint. This would seem to have the least impact on the trunk highway system and the traveling public.

The second option presents a number of potential problems. First, depending upon placement of the poles, there is the probability of snow drifting.

Second, the issue of access for construction from the interstate right of way is less than ideal. This would likely cause hazardous conditions regarding the traveling public. Presently, Minnesota Statute 173.15 restricts access to advertising devices from the interstate system. This is a safety consideration. I believe that access for the purpose of construction of this transmission line would cause far more problems than an advertising device. To name a few there will be the delivery of materials, access of the workers to the construction sites, traffic control issues, and the distraction to the traveling public.

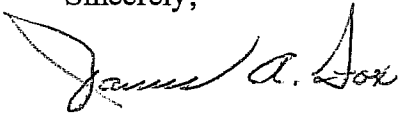
Other anticipated problems are the damage to the ditches and the fences. Past experiences have shown that landscape restoration has always been a problem. Cutting openings in the fences allows for the probability that livestock may wander onto the interstate roadway. Again, past experiences have shown that repairing the fence properly has been less than desirable.

Additionally, depending upon the exact location along the interstate there is the potential conflict with Mn/DOT radio systems, RWIS sites, microwave relays, etc.

Therefore, I must reiterate that the first option to parallel the existing right of way is by far the most preferable when considering safety, potential maintenance problems, and future access issues. To my knowledge this route has worked well for the existing transmission line and would seem that an entirely new parallel line would also work as well.

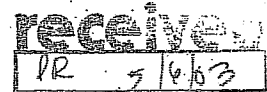
If you have any questions or if I can be of any further assistance, please contact me at 507-831-1200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James A. Fox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a distinct "A" and "F".

James A. Fox
Roadway Regulations Supervisor

cc: C.S. 3280 File
Marc Flygare
Greg Ous
Jim Swanson
George Welk
Andrew Terry - OEC



CITY HALL

(507) 847-4410 • FAX (507) 847-5586

May 2, 2003

Pam Rasmussen
Xcel Energy
1414 W. Hamilton Ave.
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008

Re: Lakefield to Fox Lake 161 kV Transmission Project

Dear Ms. Rasmussen:

Since I was unable to attend the Public Information meeting held on Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at the Best Western Country Manor Inn in Jackson, MN., I would like to reaffirm the position of the City of Jackson as presented by my assistant Steve Walker and by Airport Chairman, Richard Hample.

The City of Jackson and the Jackson Airport Commission are unanimously opposed to the potential route of Interstate 90 for the new 161 kV transmission line project. AGCO corporation is asking the City for a 5000 foot runway and with the construction of this new runway the transmission line along Interstate 90 would encroach on the approach zones of the proposed and existing runways. The City of Jackson has also taken pride in the appearance of our industrial zone which is directly south of I-90 and has buried all electrical lines in the area. This proposed 161 line would defeat the efforts of the City over the years to beautify the industrial zone with no electrical lines.

The potential north route paralleling the existing 161 kV line is a more favorable alternative for the City and Airport Commission at present. However, if a 5000 foot runway is constructed, as proposed, the north route alternative will encroach into the runway approach zone, contrary to FAA regulations. Would it be possible to detour the new and existing lines north of the airport another two miles or so further north, at least for the one mile stretch where the planned runway would be constructed?

As you can see, both locations will definitely impact the airport and the proposed 5000 foot runway expansion.

If you need further information or questions answered, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dean Albrecht
City Administrator

Lake Field to Fox Lake Public Comments

Name	Date Received	Comments	Notes
John Bodger (representing Regdob Investments)	4-27-2003	I own a parcel, south-side I-90, in Jackson with a billboard sign on it. I have no problem with the new line, as long as billboard can remain and is not visibly interfered with. I would consider allowing you to place a tower on this Jackson parcel, as long as it's south of billboard. Also, purchasing parcel from Nuway COOP in Sherburn, its at NE corner of I-90 interchange at Sherburn. Existing line runs on north-side of parcel. Purchasing lot for a billboard, would consider a tower here also.	Comment Form
Russell & Merva Fransen	4-29-2003	My first choice would be to follow the new line parallel to I-90. The reason would be a lot less wasted land. My choice on poles would be the one heavy steel post anchored in cement. My second choice would be to go down the existing line—tear out the two poles that are there and put in one heavy steel pole and hang all the circuits on one pole.	Comment Form
Theresa Rose Macek Trust	4-30-2003	Over location: Sect-17, Twp-102, Range-035, N ½ SW ¼ & S ½ NW ¼ Jackson County Des Moines Twp. We were very impressed with all of you who provided information regarding Xcel Energy at the open house at Best Western County Manor Inn in Jackson on April 23. We thank you for your interest and concern and feel confident that our following comments will be taken into consideration. If you can make the existing line work (as we were told this could be done), it would seem the way to go, but if it is decided that I-90 highway be followed we firmly hope that the line would be placed north of the highway, since our grove on the south side is right next to the ditch. Our land (farm) has been cut in half by the interstate and will now possibly be affected again by this new project. Please do all you can to alleviate any unnecessary stress for us. Thank you.	Comment Form
Stanley Nelson	4-30-2003	If you would run the Double Circuit Steel Structure where the existing lines are you have already have easement rights. With the larger farm equipment that type of pole wiring the power lines would be a plus. Running a line parallel to the existing line would make it more difficult to farm around. By taking more land, it does not improve the value of the land any—it just ruins it. Farmers would be less upset if you put the poles in the fence lines.	Comment Form
Sandra L. Nelson (Representing: S & S Acres, Inc. (Jay Township, Sec. 2))	4-30-2003	Exact same as above.	Comment Form
Vivian Erickson	5-01-2003	If you run the Double Circuit Steel Structure where the existing lines are, you already have the easement rights, and that is good. With the larger farm equipment, that type	Comment Form

Name	Date Received	Comments	Notes
Russell Erickson	5-01-2003	<p>of pole running the fence line would be a plus. Running a line parallel to the existing one would make it more difficult to farm around and by taking more land it doesn't improve the value of our farmland, it ruins it.</p> <p>I prefer using the Double Circuit Steel Structure where the existing lines are—you already have the easement rights there. With the larger farm equipment, that type of pole running the fence line would be a plus. By using more land doesn't improve the value; I'd say it ruins it. We would appreciate it if the poles were set in the fence lines. Thank you.</p>	Comment Form
Mike Erickson	5-2-2003	If you would run the Double Circuit steel structure where the existing lines are, the easement rights are already there. Running the line parallel to the existing line would not be good, hard to farm around. We would prefer to have the poles in the fence line	Comment Form
Donna Nawrocki	5-6-2003	At the present time I have one-half mile of Alliant Transmission lines and poles on my land. Not only are they a nuisance to farm around, but also are a trap for weed seed blowing in around the base and impacts the yield of our farm ground. I understand your new line would require four more poles and double the inconvenience of trying to manage the large machinery in this area. It would seem much more feasible for your new line to follow the I-90 right of way and would impact much less of the valuable tillable farmland.	Comment Form
Leland Franssen	5-6-2003	<p>The existing line is my main concern. I was informed that the line could be changed by taking the old poles down and putting in one large steel pole. The old line would be put on and the new line would be put on the same pole.</p> <p>If this doesn't work then put the new line on the south side of I-90.</p> <p>I talked to Pam on the phone. She said that would be impossible for changing the line. My son said that putting the new line with one pole up and installing that line first. Then take the old line down and hanging it on the one pole with the new line. Would this be possible?</p>	Comment Form
Charles Shearer	5-6-2003	<p>Please do not add a second line along side the old line. I would not want it or wish it on my neighbors.</p> <p>My first choice would be to replace the old line with one new line with single poles on the fence line to replace the old double wooden poles. They cannot be in perfect shape any more. This new line would carry both the old and new one. My next choice would be to follow I-90.</p>	Comment Form
Eugene Michelson & Tillmen Michelson	5-8-2003	I have one line going through my property already, which causes a nuisance when trying to farm around it. I really object to having two lines running side by side through my property. It devalues the price of the property considerably. Thank you.	Comment Form
Robert L. Stall	5-21-2003	That if the poles are on our property or fence line that they be located in such a way that they minimize problems in moving the ditch and the fieldwork. Where our farm	Comment Form

Name	Date Received	Comments	Notes
		is located I feel the best location would be on the fence line between the access road and the interstate. Also, depending upon what effect it would have on the "Life Estate," we might be interested in selling the approximately seven acres on the southeast side of the interstate, if you are interested.	
Craig Fransen	5-21-2003	I am a landowner in Section One of Des Moines Township. My concern is if you add a second set of poles they will be located in our field and not along the fence line. I would like the existing line removed and a new single pole line installed. If the second line were added it would be in our field. With today's large machinery it would be difficult to farm between a second set of poles. If it is not possible to have a single set of poles I feel it should be located along Interstate 90.	Comment Form
Ruth L. Davis	5-23-2003	I am a landowner affected by this. I think that the new electric line should be put where the existing lines already are. You should be able to update them with the existing easement already in place. To me this would affect the east amount of people in the long run. Thank you.	Letter
Thomas Davis	5-27-2003	I believe that where the existing power line is located is the best place for the new power line. The old one is old and is going to have to be replaced or major repairs in the next few years. If you do this, then you already have all the easements in place all ready so the paper work would be minimal. By doing this you would affect fewer people and stay farther away from new building sites. Also, you would not have to be crossing the Interstate Highway system.	Comment Form
Steve Lusk	4-24-03	Steve owns property along the existing 161 line. He wants the line routed along I-90. (Note: Grant Stevenson delivered Steve information about EMF on 4-24-03. Steve was concerned maybe his mother's cancer was caused by EMF. Grant showed Steve a chart of EMF vs. distance to the line, and concluded that the house was far enough away from the existing line that EMF levels from the line were less than background levels in a home.)	Grant's notes from a visit with Steve 4-23-03
Jan Cooran	6-24-2003	I strongly urge to use the current right-of-way with existing poles on it so it won't disturb any more valuable farm land. We already have the Interstate and County ditch taking up valuable producing land. We don't want to lose any more! (As we live in California we would appreciate any meeting notes or other information regarding any of the proposed changes, etc. Thanks.)	Comment Form
Timothy Schafer	7-28-03	I - Tim Schafer - representing my mother and 6 other brothers and sisters as owners of - Section 3 Jay Township Martin County - the NW 1/4 where your existing line goes through on the south property line - wish to make these comments: 1) The existing line was put in with a 2 pole and cross arm structure - 1 pole on each side of the property line. We believe that all land owners along the existing line would be more than glad if the existing wires and additional wires were put on 1 metal pole on the center of the property line which would eliminate poles in the way of planting	Comment Form

Name	Date Received	Comments	Notes
		<p>crops and harvesting.</p> <p>2). The existing poles are old and will have to be replaced sometime any way. The 1 metal pole system would not require additional right of way and would make all the farmers very happy.</p> <p>3). To put a new line parallel I-90 would be both unsightly for travelers and also more vulnerable to injury by vehicles or even terrorist.</p> <p>Thanks for allowing us to comment on this project. PS. Sorry this is so late. Thanks for your meeting at Jackson this spring.</p>	
Steve Lusk	4/16/03	Steve called asking more details on the project. He lives by the river & farms around the existing line. He understands the need but prefers I-90 since ag impacts less. I discussed w/ them that his input is important & he will have several opp. To input. Grant gave him info on 4-25 from meeting.	Phone
Ken Ruskell	4/18/03	Ken's property is near Alliant line. 8 miles west of Jackson. Line runs along south face line. Section 5 & 6. Asked about turbines. 4/25/03 sent info from meeting.	Phone
Margariete Burnmeister	4/21/03	Does not want line on 161kv route -- prefers I-90. Wants info mailed to her. Can't attend -- doesn't drive. 4/25/03 sent info.	Phone
John Vonohlen	4/21/03	His uncle owns land & is going blind. He wants info sent to him so he can talk to his uncle (Walter Vonohlen) about project. T102 R033 Sec 4 NE1/4. Send them maps. 4/25/03 sent info.	Phone
Ed Lockner	4/22/03	Can't attend meeting & wants the info. Call him if I can on 4/23 AM. 4/23/03 sent info.	Phone
Noretta Askew	4/25/03	Wants to have someone come talk to them about project since they couldn't make meeting. Talked to Dave -- her husband along their road. Send 5 packets 4/25/03 Sent info.	Phone
Ruth Davis	5/15/03	Should be on mailing list -- owns land in Davis Trust 5/15/03 mailed info	Phone
Jan Cooan	5/14/03	Wants info. Cooan Living Trust. 5/15/03 mailed info	Phone



AGCO CORPORATION
Jackson Operations
202 Industrial Park Jackson, MN 56143-9448 USA

Telephone 507/847-2690

received
5/2/03 PR

April 28, 2003

XCEL ENERGY
1414 West Hamilton Avenue
Post Office Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 5402-0008

Dear Sir or Madam:

I recently went to an informational meeting regarding the Lakefield to Fox Lake 162 KV transmission project. In that informational meeting, I spoke with Pam Rassmussen. We discussed several different issues that may complicate this project.

AGCO Jackson Operations requests that the transmission line not run on the south side of Interstate 90 because it may hinder any expansion projects that may happen in the future. We are in favor of running the line along side of the first transmission line. This would make the maintenance of the lines much easier and quicker since they would be close together.

The second alternative was to run the line along side of the railroad tracks, which are located south of the AGCO Jackson Operations property. This would not be a hindrance to us in the event of an expansion because we would not be building in that area. This would also put the transmission line in line to meet with the new substation, which was discussed in the meeting, putting it in the vicinity of the old station that is presently located near the fair grounds.

Sincerely,

AGCO JACKSON OPERATIONS

Thomes A. Diederich
Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor

TD:al